

CIA Defends Reports on Soviet Moves

By David B. Ottaway
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The Central Intelligence Agency's deputy director-designate told the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence yesterday that it was not possible or "necessarily even desirable" to try to predict what initiatives Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev is planning to take in his relations with the United States.

Richard J. Kerr, the Bush administration's choice for the second-highest CIA post, told the Senate panel that the agency was faced with a problem of "facts and analysis" in seeking to predict such Gorbachev initiatives as his December announcement of a unilateral reduction of 500,000 troops in Europe and his bid for a sweeping arms-control accord at the Reykjavik summit in October 1986.

"I don't think prediction of precise outcome is either possible or necessarily even desirable. When you're wrong, I'm not sure how helpful you've been to the customer," he said.

Kerr said the agency faced certain inherent problems in seeking to provide U.S. policymakers with predictions on Soviet behavior that included not only "facts and analysis" but the fact that "sometimes the people that are making the decisions have not yet made the decision that you're trying to predict."

Kerr was responding at his confirmation hearing to questions posed by Sen. Bill Bradley (D-N.J.), who was pressing him for an explanation of why the CIA had failed to predict several recent Soviet initiatives in time for the Reagan ad-



RICHARD J. KERR

... says Gorbachev is hard to predict

ministration to deal more effectively with them.

Kerr, a 28-year agency veteran who has been deputy CIA director for intelligence since April 1986, is the administration's nominee to take the place of Robert M. Gates, who has moved to the White House to become deputy national security adviser.

Kerr defended the agency's record regarding its general warnings "in a variety of different documents" about possible unilateral Soviet troop reductions though he admitted it had not predicted "the precise magnitude of them."

He questioned whether the CIA could do more in general than lay out for U.S. decision-makers possible Soviet actions and an understanding of the potential outcome and impact for the administration. "That's the role of intelligence. Not to predict outcomes in clear, neat ways. That's not doable," he said.

Kerr nonetheless agreed with Bradley that the CIA needed to commit additional resources to this area, particularly regarding the Soviet Union.

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